

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SS-14 RSR-01 RSC-01 /029 W

----- 064091

R 290901 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1934

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANAA 505

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OCON, IR, YE

SUBJECT: NEA CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE:

YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC SUMMARY

REF: STATE 55401

ADDIS ABABA FOR AMBASSADOR CRAWFORD

I. GIVEN THE TROUBLES AND DIVISIONS WHICH BESET IT,
IT IS A SMALL MIRACLE THAT THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC
(YAR) SURVIVES AT ALL. FOLLOWING IS LIST OF ITS
PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS:

1. DISLOCATIONS CAUSED BY 1962-68 BITTER CIVIL WAR
(WHICH WAS IN FACT A VICARIOUS WAR BETWEEN EGYPT,
BACKING THE REPUBLICANS, AND SAUDI ARABIA, BACKING
THE ROYALISTS). NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WAS NOT BROUGHT
ABOUT UNTIL 1970, TWO YEARS AFTER DETESTED EGYPTIAN
OCCUPATION ARMY WAS FINALLY FORCED TO WITHDRAW.
2. RELIGIOUS DIVISIONS BETWEEN SHIA (ZAYDI) MOSLEM
ELEMENT IN NORTHER PART OF COUNTRY, AND SUNNIS
(SHAFARI) IN SOUTH.
3. FURTHER DIVISIONS BETWEEN AFRICAN- DERIVED FARMERS ON
SWELTERING NORTH- SOUTH COASTAL PLAIN, SEDENTARY MOUNTAIN
DWELLERS OF SEMITIC ORIGIN IN CENTRAL HIGHLANDS, AND
EASTERN NOMADIC TRIBES.

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4. CONFLICTING INTERESTS OF THE THREE KEY GROUPS WHICH JOINED IN UNEASY COOPERATION IN SUPPORT OF THE REPUBLICAN REVOLUTION: TRIBAL SHAIKHS, ARMY, AND MINUSCULE URBAN EDUCATED AND SEMI- EDUCATED POLITICAL IDEALISTS.

5. DIVISIONS BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT, WITH LEFTIST IDEALOGY (MARXIST, MAOIST, AND BA' ATHI) FOUND MOST STRONGLY IN URBAN CENTERS, IN MEDIA, IN GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC AGENCIES, AND AMONG YOUTH.

6. FUNDAMENTAL CONFLICT (WHICH CONTINUES DESPITE ESSENTIALLY TOUGUE- IN- CHEEK EXERCISES OF UNITY TALKS) WITH COMMUNIST- CONTROLLED PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN. PDY, DESPITE HAVING APPROXIMATELY ONE- FIFTH OF NORTHER YEMENBJS POPULATION (1.5 VERSUS 6.5) HAS MILITANTLY EXPANSIVE IDEALOGY AND RUTHLESS LEADERSHIP. WITH UNSTINTING SUPPORT FROM USSR, WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE CHOSEN SOUTHERN SIDE FOR ITS STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES (CONTROL OF BAB AL MANDAB STRAITS, EXCELLENT PORT, FIRST RATE MILITARY AIRPORT INHERITED FROM BRITISH, OIL REFINERY, BUNKERING FACILITIES, ETC.) AND ORCHESTRATED AID FROM EAST GERMANY, OTHER BLOC STATES AND CUBA, AND A SEPARATE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FROM CHINA, PDY APPEARS DETERMINED TO CREATE MAYHEM IN ARABIAN PENINSULA. IN NORTHERN YEMEN IT IS USING TERRORISM AND ASSASSINATION TO KEEP YARG OFF BALANCE. ITS IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE SEEMS TO BE TO GAIN CONTROL OVER SHAFI SECTORS OF SOUTHERN YAR. TACTICS ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE EMPLOYED BY VIET CONG: NIGHT RAIDS, ROAD MININGS, INTIMIDATION TO COMPEL TAXATION, ASSASSINATION OF LOCAL LEADERS WHO RESIST, ETC. LOOKING EAST, PDY PROVIDES SUPPORT AND CHANNEL FOR ARMS TO OMANI REBELS AND FPLOAC WHICH STEPPING UP OPERATIONS IN GULF STATES.

7. CONFRONTED WITH A TRULY DANGEROUS NEIGHBOR, YAR'S DEFENSES ARE IN ABYSMAL SHAPE. ITS ARMY DEPENDS ON AN ODSOLETE SOVIET INVENTORY ACQUIRED FROM THE USSR IN THE MID-1950 S AND LATER INDIRECTLY THROUGH EGYPT. BUT, FAVORING THE SOUTH, THE USSR HAS CUT OFF ALL SPARE PARTS AND AMMUNITION FOR AT LEAST THE PAST TWO YEARS. IN CASE OF A RENEWAL OF LAST FALL' S OPEN WARFARE WITH
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THE SOUTH, THE NORTH WOULD BE RELATIVELY DEFENSELESS.

HAVING NO AIR FORCE IT IS PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO
AIR ATTACK.

8. AS IF ALL THIS NOT BAD ENOUGH, YAR AND YARG
DESPERATELY POOR. IBRD ESTIMATES PER CAPITA GNP AT
50 DOLLARS BUT THIS MAY BE HIGH. IMPORTS ARE TEN TIMES
EXPORTS AND AN IMPOVERISHED YARG DEPENDS HEAVILY ON
FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM RICH PENINSULA NEIGHBORS, ESP.

SAUDI ARABIA.

9. FINALLY, YARG NOT EVEN IN CONTROL OF MUCH OF ITS
OWN TERRITORY. IN ADDITION TO TROUBLES WITH
SHAFANJI IN SOUTHERN PORTION OF COUNTRY AS STIMULATED BY
LIDRY, YARG HAS LITTLE OR NO AUTHORITY IN ITS EASTERN
DESERT REGIONS. THESE ARE IN EFFECT CONTROLLED BY
SAUDI ARABIA THROUGH DIRECT SUBSIDIES TO TRIBAL LEADERS.
SAG ACTIVITIES ARE PART OF ITS RUNNING BATTLE, WAGED
IN PART ON YEMEN'S TERRITORY AND IN PART FURTHER TO EAST,
AGAINST PDRY AND LATTER'S METASTASIZING SUBVERSION AIMED
AT UNSEATING WESTERN OIL INTERESTS ON THE PENINSULA
AND IN THE GULF.

II. BESET BY ALL THESE PROBLEMS, WHY DOES NORTH YEMEN
SURVIVE? SEVERAL ANSWERS:

1. THERE IS IN YAR A COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT,
WHICH SUPPORTS AN UNEASY COOPERATION AND CONSENSUS AMONG
FACTIONS WHOSE INTERESTS IN OTHER RESPECT DIFFER
MARKEDLY. THIS COMMITMENT IS A RESULT OF THE BITTER
MEMORIES OF APPALLING TYRANICAL RULE DURING CENTURIES OF
YEMENI IMAMATE: A GENERALLY BARBARIC AND MEDIAEVAL
THEOCRATIC DICTATORSHIP. THIS COMMITMENT WAS REINFORCED
BY 1962-68 CIVIL WAR DURING WHICH YEMENIS AND YEMEN WERE
TORN APART BY A FOREIGN CONFLICT FEEDING ON INTERNAL
SPLITS. DESPITE THEIR PERSONAL RIVALRIES THE VAGUOUS
ELEMENTS OF MILITARY, SHAIKHLI AND URBAN POLITICAL
LEADERSHIP WORK HARD TO KEEP THEIR DIVERGENCIES
SUFFICIENTLY UNDER CONTROL SO THAT THE REPUBLICAN
EXPERIMENT IS NOT ENDANGERED.

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 RSR-01 RSC-01 /029 W

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R 290901 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1935

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANAA 0505

2. IN PRESIDENT AL- IRYANI, YAR IS FORTUNATE TO HAVE A FATHER FIGURE AND LONG- TIME STATESMAN OF THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT WHO HOLDS THE RESPECT OF ALL FACTIONS AND WHO LEADS BENIGNLY AND SUBTLY. HIS STYLE IS TO PRETEND TO BE LED BY A FORM OF CONSENSUS AMONG PRINCIPAL POWER FACTIONS. THIS HAS THE ADVANTAGE PUTTING ON OTHERS THE ONUS FOR DAY- TO- DAY DECISIONS-- AND MISTAKES.

3. YEMEN' S ARE BLESSED WITH A CONSCIOUSNESS OF HISTORY,

INTELLECTUAL AGILITY AND (UNUSUAL IN THE ARAB WORLD) A WORK ETHIC. THE FACTS THAT THEY HAVE HAD AN IDENTIFIABLE NATION AND CIVILIZATION FOR MORE THAN 4,000 YEARS AND THAT THE YEMEN WAS THE POINT OF ORIGIN FOR LATER ARAB CIVILIZATIONS TO THE NORTH ARE MATTERS OF DEEP PRIDE TO EVERY YEMENI. THERE IS A RELATED AWARENESS THAT YEMEN HAS APPROXIMATELY HALF THE POPULATION OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THAT ONLY IN THIS CENTURY HAS THE REST OF THE PENINSULA DEVELOPED UNITS OF COMPARATIVE POLITICAL COHESIVENESS.

4. YEMENIS HAVE NATIVE TALENT FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. YAR WAS THE FIRST ARAB COUNTRY TO BRING RUSSIANS AND CHINESE INTO A COMPETITION TO CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR COUNTRY' S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. YAR HAS STEADILY EXPANDED GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL COUNTRIES IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE. IT IS ON GOOD TERMS WITH ALL ARAB STATES SAVE PDRY AND IRAQ. IT IS OFFICIALLY NON- ALIGNED BUT AVOIDS INDULGENCE IN MEANINGLESS NON- ALIGNED RHETORIC.
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III. U. S. POLICIES.

1. AS PRACTICAL MATTER, USG HAD PAID LITTLE ATTENTION TO YEMEN UNTIL RUSSIAN AND CHINESE INFLUX IN 1950' S. BY 1959, WE HAD OUR OWN LEGATION AND, BY 1960, A USAID PROGRAM. DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND WATER RESOURCES, THIS IGOGRAM CONTINUED UNTIL YEMEN BROKE RELA-

TIONS IN 1967 AT INSTIGATION OF THE THEN OCCUPYING EGYPTIANS. YEMENIS CAME TO REGRET THIS RUPTURE. SEVERAL TENTATIVE OVERTURES LOOKING FORWARD RESUMPTION OF CONTACT RESULTED, IN 1970, IN ESTABLISHMENT OF A U. S. INTERESTS SECTION. IN JULY 1972, YAR FINALLY PUT ASIDE ITS FEARS OF OTHER ARAB REACTION AND, LOOKING TO ITS OWN INTERESTS, SOUGHT AND ACHIEVED A FULL RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS AT THE TIME OF SECRETARY ROGERS' VISIT. WE GAVE ASSURANCES OF A RENEWED READINESS TO ASSIST YEMEN'S DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.

2. USG BELIEVES BEST MEANS OF COMBATING AND PREVENTING SPREAD OF COMMUNIST VIRUS IN PDRY IS ASSISTANCE TO SURROUNDING STATES TO EVOKE THEM DEVELOP RAPIDLY AND MEET THE POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS OF THEIR PEOPLE. FURTHER, USG CONSIDERS THAT LARGER AND MORE PROSPEROUS AREA STATES SHOULD PLAY LARGEST POSSIBLE ROLE IN SUPPORT OF SUCH DEVELOPMENT. FLOWING FROM THESE CONCEPTS, WE ARE THIS MONTH INAUGURATING IN YAR A MODEST US AID PROGRAM CONSISTING ESSENTIALLY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN AGRICULTURE AND WATER DEVELOPMENT, AND FOOD SUPPLIES. AT YEMEN REQUEST, WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY STIMULATED MORE ACTIVE ROLES BY UN AGENCIES AND PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS. FOR CAPITAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED BY YAR, WE ENCOURAGE GENEROSITY ON PART OF ITS WEALTHY NEIGHBORS, SAUDI ARABIA, KUWAIT, AND UAE.

3. IT IS IN MILITARY SPHERES THAT OUR DECISIONS HAVE BEEN HARDER. SINCE RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS, YARG HAS NOT UNNATURALLY TURNED TO U. S. IN SEARCH OF NEW ARMS TO REPLACE LARGELY UNUSEABLE SOVIET INVENTORY AND DEVELOP EFFECTIVE DEFENSE AGAINST PDRY. WE HAVE SOUGHT TO PURSUADE YARG THAT DIRECT U. S. ROLE NOT IN ITS INTERESTS OR OURS. WE HAVE URGED IT RELY ON BETTER EQUIPPED, BETTER FUNDED AREA FRIENDS, PARTICULARLY SAUDI ARABIA, AND IRAN TO
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SUPPLY NEEDED EQUIPMENT. WITH SAUDI ARABIA, WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN SELL IT FOR YAR USE SUCH EQUIPMENT AS YAR AND SAG, AND SAG IN SEPARATE CONSULTATION WITH US, MAY DETERMINE TO BE ESSENTIAL AND ABSORABABLE. THIS HAS BEEN A HARD APPROACH TO SELL TO THE YAR WHICH IS HISTORICALLY NOT OVER FOND OF ITS NEIGHBOR TO THE NORTH AND WHICH FEELS THE DANVER FROM ADEN IS TOO PRESSING TO PERMIT LUXURY OF THIS INDIRECT ROUTE.

4. CURRENT TALKS CONCERNING UNITY BETWEEN THE TWO YEMENS, AN IDEAL AS CHERISHED AS GREEK CYPRIOT ASPIRATION OF UNION WITH GREECE AND AS CURRENTLY UNREALISTIC, ARE A GOOD DIPLOMATIC DEFENSE FOR YAR AGAINST PDRY DEPREDATIONS;

THEY BUY TIME IN WHICH TO IMPROVE MILITARY DEFENSES. BUT IF, AS IS QUITE LIKELY, TALKS BREAK DOWN AND ACTIVE WAR WITH SOUTH RECOMMENCES, USG MAY BE OBLIGED RECONSIDER ITS ATTITUDE AGAINST DIRECT SUPPLY.

5. IN MEANWHILE USG IS SEEKING USE ITS AREA RELATIONSHIPS, WITH ETHIOPIA, SUDAN, SAUDI ARABIA, JORDAN, KUWAIT, UAE AND IRAN, TO HELP YARG CREATE A NETWORK OF STATAS THAT SUPPORT YARG IN ITS DIFFICULT CONFRONTATION WITH SOVIET-BACKED PDRY.

IV. POST STAFFING.

AT THE TIME RELATIONS BETWEEN USG AND YARG WERE RENEWED LAST JULY, COMPLEMENT OF AMERICAN EMPLOYEES IN USINT SECTION WAS SIX. BY EARLY SUMMER OF 1973, EVEN KEEPING NUMBERS TO BARE BONE NECESSARY FOR SUBSTANTIVE PROGRAMS, THIS WILL HAVE RISEN TO 29 (14 EMBASSY, 14 AID, 1 USIS). BY FALL, THIS WILL BE INCREASED BY APPROXIMATELY FIFTEEN PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS, FOR TOTAL OF 44. THIS SEVEN-FOLD INCREASE, WHILE NECESSARY, TO MEET USG AID COMMITMENT IS DIFFICULT TO ACCOMMODATE FINANCIALLY AND LOGISTICALLY, E. G. , RESUMPTIONHOF RELATIONS IN YAR WAS NOT FORESEEN IN FY 1973 BUDGET PRESENTATION; SUITABLE HOUSING IN YEMEN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN. SANITATION, HEALTH CONDITIONS, MEDICAL FACILITIES ARE VERY POOR. HOWEVER, AND ALTHOUGH IN MAKE- SHIFT FASHION, WE HAVE LARGELY MANAGED TO ABSORB THE EXPANSION. OUTSTANDING QKRESOLVED PROBLEM REMAINS UNWILLINGNESS AID/ W PROVIDE
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POSITIONS TO ENABLE US GIVE PROPER ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO ITS PROGRAMS.
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: kelleyw0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SANAA00505
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SANAA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730341/aaaailkg.tel
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Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 STATE 55401
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kelleyw0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29-Oct-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <30-Oct-2001 by kelleyw0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 980107
Subject: NEA CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE: YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC SUMMARY
TAGS: OCON, IR, YE
To: NEA
SECSTATE WASHDC INFO ADDIS ABABA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005